1: Gayton E-5 (1925-1930) 1948 NS29 Yokuts NS29
[P. 786] Wukchumni

Salt

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[439]

Modern "American" salt is called kuyu. In old times two kinds of salt were available. Rock salt (tus) was bought from the Monachi (Eastern Mono), who said it "came from a whole hill of salt that looked like snow." Before it was used this salt was heated on hot coals, which caused it to crumble. The other and more common salt (a'd:t) was derived from marsh grass, and was called in English "red salt" because "it looked red all over the grass."

Once M.L. and her stepmother, who was a Gawia, went over to Haditao for salt. The old women dug up the grass that grew there. She got some wood and made a fire. At sundown she put the grass on the fire which had burned down to coals. M.L. went to sleep but her stepmother stayed up until the grass was reduced to ashes. Then she lay down for a little while. She would not let the little girl look closely at the fire, nor would she herself eat anything. She worked all the next day piling up more grass. At sundown she ate a little bit but would not drink, explaining that if she ate much or drank water there would be nothing in the fire when she finished. When the ashes were brushed away there were lumps of salt in the bottom of the fire. The old woman lifted these out and freed them from the ashes by shaking them in an open-twined basket.

In 1925 M.L. had some grass-salt which she prized. It was greyish pink in color, had the texture of coarse sugar and the taste of mild vinegar.

Kroeber makes a somewhat different statement about grass-salt.[191]

The Yaudanchi,...with other southern tribes, gathered a salty grass known as alit and beat it on stones to extract the juice; which was particularly favored with green clover.

This was a grass growing in alkaline ground which was abundant in the tular.

Woman's Household Equipment

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A Wukchumni woman's housekeeping equipment comprised one or more digging sticks, a soaproot brush, hot-rock lifters, and a "set" of baskets. The digging stick (ča'poi, lit., mountain ash) was made of manzanita, if obtainable, or of young white oak. The length varied according to the owner's preference. The tip was charred and rubbed down on rough stone which gave a heat-hardened point; the point was reworked by the same method when it became too blunt. Sometimes a woman who liked a short stick (about four feet long) would contrive a

[191] Handbook, 539.

263 439 to three-quarters of an inch in diameter, carrying them in burden baskets. The salt was paid for in baskets or shell money. A quantity 263 435 of salt about as large as a pine cone would be worth 50 cents in American money, in native terms, a basket about the same size (as a pine [804] cone) or a kelan of beads (a strand the circumference of the flat hand). The Mono came over several times a year.

263 Rock salt was ground to varying degrees of fineness and eaten with meat, nuts, or seeds, but not with acorns. Rock salt to be eaten with acorns was "burned black" first. A layer of salt was covered with hot ashes, then pounded in an acorn hole and mixed with a certain "grass" that grows in or at the edges of the river. The grass and salt were mashed together then formed into balls about six inches thick. Water was added if needed to make it stick together. The grass was wrapped around the balls, making a thick covering. Several such balls were put in a hole filled with very hot ashes and left all night. In the morning the balls, from which the grass wrapping had burned, were dug out and brushed hard with a soaproot brush. A ball might be struck a blow and the pieces given to various people. Three to five balls would be made at a time, which would last an average family a whole year. [Just how this type of salt was used with acorns was not stated. -- A.H.G.]

● 258 263 The salt called 'alit' was derived from salt grass which is covered with a white incrustation when growing. It was gathered by hand, spread to dry on flat rocks, then pounded in a mortar hole. Then it was winnowed from a circular winnowing tray, the grass particles wafting out and the salt grains remaining. The salt was dampened and pressed into balls, but these were not baked. The balls were broken as needed for use. This salt was eaten with clover and sour berries; if it was unobtainable, then rock salt was used.

The Chukchansi "went to the plains to scrape a sort of alkali off the ground," says Kroeber.[93]

Beverages

273 [423] 222 When manzanita berries are nearly ripe, women specify certain bushes as theirs, said J.R., and no one else can take the berries from them.[94] When the berries were thoroughly ripe, the ground under a bush was raked clean of all leaves and twigs, until the ground was bare. The woman took a long pole and, standing close to the bush, knocked all the berries to the ground. Then she took a flat short stick to

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[93] Handbook, 530.

[94] It is not clear whether a woman claimed the same bushes each year or specified them anew according to the crop promised by various bushes. -- A.H.G.

Fishing

Y W 226 Fish were scarce in the upper streams in Waksachi territory, said B.O.[162] They were captured by poisoning; no spear or harpoon was used (B.O. and S.O.). (Perhaps because of the smallness of the streams in their vicinity.) A plant called ya´ohao (not soaproot, but unidentified) was mashed and scattered over the water. The fish became active, jumping around in the water, then became stupefied, when they were scooped up in fish baskets. Men prepared the poison, merely by mashing the plant leaves, but both sexes took part in capturing the fish.

Foods

●Y W 263 258 ● Salt.---Salt was obtained from "a bush that looked like a tomato vine." While living at Čoloku (on Fisher's Ranch), S.O.'s father-in-law and his mother's sister used to gather it. To obtain the salt a pit was dug about 2 feet long, 1 foot wide, and 1 foot deep. In this a fire was built and let burn down to coals. A grating was made by laying hardwood sticks across the earth's surface and on this the plants were laid. The whole thing was fanned with a fire fan. A material then oozed out of the plants and dropped on the coals forming large lumps. Then the whole thing was covered with earth and left overnight. In the morning the pit was opened and the salt, which was now a hard large mass, was cleaned of dirt. These Y W [264] lumps were trimmed and sold. This salt was eaten in tiny bits with meat; it was never put directly on food or cooked with it. The plant (or grass ?) which produced this salt was called in Michahai, ṭi´k:t koi´yo (smells salt), in Wukchumni, a´l:t, and in Waksachi, u´nab:. It was sometimes boiled and the liquid drunk to Y W [439] cure nausea. Salt or brackish springs were all called tuša´o.

Rock salt (koiyo, Michahai) was obtained in trade from the Eastern Mono.

Y W 272 263 Manzanita cider.---Manzanita berries were gathered, mashed on a tray with a small pestle, and put into a sieve above a large clean mush basket. Water, poured over the mass, seeped through into the larger basket. A powdered plant called ča´m:t (Michahai; pasida, Spanish; unidentified) was added as a thickener and flavorer. There were four or five such flavorers known, but S.O. could not name them. The manzanita drink thickened as it stood, and people came to drink it at whatever stage they preferred. It began to sour after twenty-four to forty-eight hours and was no longer thought fit to drink. S.O. insisted that it was in no sense intoxicating.

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[162] Trout should be abundant; possibly he meant scarce in comparison with the numerous varieties of the lower foothill rivers and sloughs.

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29

is near the depot at Lemon Cove. Near the bridge across the Kaweah River on the road between Woodlake and Lemon Cove was a salt spring which the Wukchumne called *Tushow* (ow as in cow). They obtained salt by boiling and evaporating the water.

Three miles northeast of Woodlake, the Pohut home, (NW ¼ of Section 28, T17S, R27E, MDB&M) was *Tahponguh*, or Buckeye Springs.

The small lone hill, about a half mile southeast of Lind Cove, was known as *Kowichow* (Kow-ih'-chow).

The mixed color paintings on Bacon Hill, north of Redbanks, and the hill itself, were called *Hucha Ingutch*, meaning Writings.

About one-half mile west of Woodlake is a low swale running north and south. It was named *Ahd-tow*, meaning Salt Gathering Place. Salt grass still grows in the bottom of it.

At the east end of the straight stretch of pavement leading east from Woodlake is a small flat, below a very rocky gulch (NW ¼ of Section 33, T17S, R27E, MDB&M). This was a favorite place for gathering grass nuts (*kawatchip*). It was named *Kawatch Pawme*. In the old days there was a fine spring there. About three hundred yards northeast, and uphill from Kawatch Pawme, is a small flat called *Hawyaw Heitch*. A mythological spirit guarded the spring there and claimed that he could hear whenever anyone spoke his name. The name means Name Calling Place.

On the Dry Creek Road, which runs north from the bridge across the Kaweah River between Woodlake and Lemon Cove, are several Indian landmarks. To the north, as this road leaves the hills and starts across the first small valley, (west portion of Section 26, T17S, R27E, MDB&M) there is an old acorn-grinding site. It is about seventy-five yards west of the road and is marked by granite rocks containing many acorn pounding mortars. Its name was *Pachakish* (Pah-chah'-kish). Due north of this site, at the end of the straight stretch of road is a small bare hill which was called *Tacayu* (Tah-cah'-yoo).

West of Tacayu about a mile and a half is a spring which was known as *Shuquoyun* or Elk Place. It is at the foot of the grade leading to the Pohut place and Buckeye Springs (Tahponguh). In the hills just east of Lemon Cove (SW¼ of Section 1, T18S, R27E, MDB&M) there was a fine spring and a village named Choyo. Over the hill southeast of Lemon Cove

3: Latta Y-5 (1923-1948)1949 NS29 Yokuts NS29
Yowlumne

411 Arrows were commonly fletched with feathers from the tail of the red-tailed hawk. Feathers from the wings of this 237 hawk were also used. When red-tailed hawk feathers could not be secured, tail and wing feathers were used from the other native hawks, and sometimes from the great horned owl. Feathers were fastened to the mainshaft by means of sinews [823] which were commonly waterproofed with asphaltum. Feathers were trimmed to shape with the glowing edge of a fired piece of sycamore bark.

411 Yowlumne Indians state that the best arrow shafts were made from long, straight shoots of spiny gooseberry. These 824 were very strong and, when once straightened, remained straight. But most arrow shafts were made of the heartwood of buttonwillow, which was also very strong. After it had been straightened and hardened by being seasoned over a fire, or on a heated soapstone arrow straightener, it also retained its shape very well. The native cane or bamboo was also used for making arrow shafts. These were straightened on the heated soapstone arrow straightner. The Yowlumne also harvested a [258] crude sugar from the leaves of this same cane in much the same way that salt was harvested from the leaves of salt grass.

411 Spears were also commonly used by the Yokuts. For some kinds of hunting they were used almost entirely. Raccoons and [224] bears were most often killed with spears. There were two kinds of spears. One, to be held in the hands and used for repeated thrusts, was short and heavy and was made of one piece of elderwood.

[824] A second type of spear was actually a primitive javelin. The shaft was also made of elderwood, was tapered smaller toward the rear, and was from five to six feet long. Javelins were foreshafted like the two-piece arrows, but used a much larger stone point, some as long as four inches. As all spears might be used in the water (but never to spear fish) all sinews [823] were waterproofed with asphaltum.

A roll of tules was also fitted to the foreshaft of the javelin when it was thrown at raccoon, beaver, or otter in the water. This converted it into a skip-bomb weapon.